

The Great Murder Mystery.

SYNOPSIS OF PRECEDING CHAPTERS.

D. JOSHUA CLEVERLY, a retired millionaire, was found dying in the library of his country home near Yonkers, on the Hudson. He had been struck down by an unknown hand, but the discovery that the doctor's safe had been rifled of some \$7,000 and the millionaire's will led to the belief that he was the victim of professional burglars. Being roused into consciousness for a few moments before he expired, Dr. Cleverly made the astounding declaration that the murderous blow had been struck by Hugh Bartlett—the fiancé of his charming daughter, Dorothy Cleverly.

The dying man distinctly saw young Bartlett's face as he opened the library door, and at the same instant was struck down by Bartlett. Detective John Conlin, one of the best men of the Police Headquarters staff, at once determined upon the pursuit of Bartlett, who had been missing from home for some days. At this point, however, Miss Dorothy Cleverly puts together some torn scraps of paper which had been left behind by the robbers, and finds that she has discovered a cryptogram puzzle in her lover's well-known handwriting. She reads the left-hand side of the mysterious cryptogram she sees "Pick safe lock for will and seven thousand."

Dorothy believes that the cryptogram contains the solution of the whole mystery, and begins to point a theory that Hugh Bartlett was forced against his will to take some part in the crime. Her views are utterly at variance with those of the detective.

She studies the cryptogram once more and discovers that the word "hypothesis" is an indication to read the words in the direction of the hypothesis. She does this and reads: "Railroad a certain old Dr. Cleverly with the confounded patch."

She is still studying the cryptogram when a ruffian sneaks through the window and seizes her.

She escapes and tells him to the ground with a block of marble. When he recovers he tells her that he had been lured to kidnap her by a man calling himself "Hugh Bartlett." In return for a sum of money the ruffian, who is called Brockey Ben, agrees to aid her in unravelling the mystery.

Studying the cryptogram, Dorothy finds a list of fifteen hidden towns in it, indicating the route of the fleeing murderers. These are Dayton, Omaha, Carson, Raleigh, Rome, Elston, Easton, Winona, Newark, Toronto, Denver, Diglas, Reading, Macon, Atchison. The words "central city" indicate "Winona" as their final destination.

Then reading the hypothesis of the cryptogram from the right top to the left bottom she finds this clue to the hiding place of the will and money: "Northern end of old church; follow centre to centre, going a thousand yards."

After many trying adventures Dorothy starts for Winona in pursuit of the murderers.

Only one problem in the Sunday Journal's Great Cryptogram Mystery remains to be solved, namely:

The application of the key, which locates the exact spot where the murderers are hiding. The answer to this will be given in next Sunday's Journal. The best solution first received will win the sender a free trip to the Paris World's Fair of 1900 and a two weeks' sojourn in Paris, with all expenses paid. You can send as many solutions as you please from now until the last instalment of the story is printed. Address TRIP TO PARIS PRIZE, P. O. BOX 1542, THE JOURNAL, NEW YORK CITY.

(Continued from Last Sunday.)

CHAPTER XI.

Dorothy in Deadly Peril.



HE explosion shattered the door which opened into the hall and the electric lights went out. The occupants of the studio were thrown off their feet, but fortunately no one was hurt.

Dorothy was the first to recover from the shock. As she sprang up she and her companions heard a warning cry in a fear-stricken voice:

"Fire!"

It came from the hall. A heavy volume of smoke, ill-smelling, thick and blinding, poured into the apartment.

"We must get out of here," said Brockey Ben.

"The hall is on fire," cried Miss Rossmore.

"We can't escape that way," Brockey Ben said.

"Where are the fire escapes?" Brockey Ben asked.

"On the other side of the house," Brockey Ben said.

"We can't reach that," Brockey Ben said.

"Hello! The sky light! We'll get out of here in a jiffy and reach the roof, anyway."

Brockey Ben did not waste a moment. He turned a table up on end, clambered up, and with a mallet broke the glass and frame of the skylight.

"Here, Miss Dorothy, I'll help you up first. Give me your hand," Brockey Ben said.

"No, let Elsie!" Dorothy rejoined.

"Come! Here you go. This is no time to argue," and unconsciously he reached down, caught hold of Dorothy's arm and lifted her up into the perch. "Now, you catch hold of that frame and I'll help you up. There you are."

Dorothy crawled out on the roof, and she was joined in a few seconds by Brockey Ben and Miss Rossmore.

The studio building was one story higher than the adjoining houses.

"I'll lower you both onto the roof of the next house," Ben remarked as he led the way over to the west side and then halted at the edge of the roof.

The flames were shooting up in the air through the roof like long, red tongues of fire. It was clear the building was doomed.

Dorothy and her companions climbed down to the roof of the adjoining house. By this time the firemen had opened the scuttles, and they were able to pass down through the building and out into the street.

"How the place burns! I hope no one is still inside!" Dorothy said, as they halted on the opposite side of the street and viewed the blaze.

"All the tenants on my floor were out," Miss Rossmore replied.

"There's a dinner at the Kit Kat Club to-night, and the boys are attending it. I feel sorry for some of them, because they will lose everything, and just at the present time, when things are so dull and work is scarce, they have a hard scramble to make both ends meet. None of them carried any insurance."

"And I am the cause of it," Dorothy interrupted. "Elsie, you must give me the names of your neighbors and I'll—"

"What will you do? You say you are the cause of this fire? I don't see—"

"You don't understand. I'll explain—"

"Say, Miss," Brockey Ben interrupted, "let us get away from here. You two ladies go to a hotel. I'll meet you in the morning, Miss Dorothy."

"Your advice is sensible, Mr. Ben, and we will act on it," Miss Rossmore said.

The panhandler plotted them through the crowd and left them at the ladies' entrance to the Holland House, after he and Dorothy had arranged to meet early the next morning.

As soon as Dorothy and Miss Rossmore were seated in their room in the hotel they proceeded to discuss the curious cryptogram of the fire.

"I am positive that Brockey and I were followed to your studio," Dorothy remarked as she looked back and forth in her chair and looked at her friend. "Whoever the miscreant was he set a dynamite bomb off outside that door. The motive is clear to me. He wanted to kill me. Now, Elsie, do you understand what I mean when I said that I was the cause of your loss and that of the others?"

"I am glad we registered here under assumed names. I shall leave here in disguise. I want you to start a rumor to the effect that I perished in the fire."

"I will do it, Dorothy, but—"

"But what?"

"I wish you would engage a detective and not run any more risks."

"That I will not do. My mind is made up. I am going to track the murderers

until I find their hiding place and have succeeded in rescuing Hugh."

"If the murderers have taken the route which you think they have, what can be their object in dragging Hugh all over the country with them?"

"I don't know. They may not have Hugh with them. He may be a prisoner in some one of their hiding places in or near Winona, O. I am going direct to that town."

"That seconded Danforth may know all about it now."

"He probably does."

"If he is in league with the murderers he will no doubt communicate his information."

"True."

"I must help you," said Miss Rossmore. "I am not going to let you go West alone. I will disguise myself also. Then, when our friends hear nothing of us, they will naturally surmise that I also perished in the fire. These murderers, if any one of them inspired the crime of to-night, will probably make inquiries to find out if we escaped. No one asked us our names as we fled into the street, where we were lost in the crowd. When your enemies can discover no trace of either one of us they naturally will conclude we are dead."

"So it was determined that Miss Rossmore was to accompany Dorothy and Brockey on their trip. At the appointed place they joined Brockey and went direct to the depot, where they purchased tickets and took the train for the West. The tramp rode in the smoking car. He occupied a seat near the rear door. After the train had started he commenced to inspect his fellow passengers. Finally his whole attention was riveted on a man who was sitting in the seat near the front door. It was Philip Danforth.

Brockey, secure in his disguise, settled back in the seat and smoked vigorously, while he kept his eyes fixed upon Danforth. Was Danforth aware that he and Dorothy were on the train, and was he following them?"

CHAPTER XII.

Detective Conlin Comes to Life.

Detective Conlin lay upon the floor of the vault like one dead. The heavy atmosphere of the place had overpowered him. If he were not soon released death would be inevitable.

A period of an hour passed by and then there was a sudden click as of a strong spring, and the door opened.

A flood of fresh air swept through the passage. The bright rays of a lantern pierced the gloom. At the threshold stood Reuben Smithers and another man. There was a great contrast between the two.

Smithers' companion's face had quite a scholarly appearance and was rather severe and clerical. He halted and turned his gaze full upon the motionless form of the detective. A smile of satisfaction crossed his countenance.

"I guess he's done for," Reuben ventured.

"I hope so," the other replied. "A most dangerous enemy is thus thrust from our path. But we'll make sure."

"Yes," Smithers rejoined in a voice that was almost a whisper, "and with Dorothy Cleverly out of the way, too, the secret will be safe."

"Do you think this fellow had a clew?"

"I think so, Mr. Gardiner. Shall I search him?"

"No, that would interfere with the plan I have mapped out."

"He may have papers on him."

"Nothing of any value, rest assured of that. If he had an abundance of money and jewelry I might be tempted to appropriate them. It is my intention to convey him to the river and deposit him securely beneath the water. When the body is found people will be under the impression that he fell in. The contents of his pockets being untouched will strengthen the opinion."

"You take his head and I'll take his heels."

Smithers caught hold of Conlin by the head and Gardner seized his heels. They started out of the passage with their burden, and then, crossing the river, hurried down a path till they came to the river's edge.

"In with him," Gardner said, as they swung the body back and forth. Conlin's body shot out and fell with a loud splash into the water.

"What's next?" Smithers asked, as they started back for the main road.

"I've got the rig up here. We will drive down to the lower station and take the train for New York and meet Danforth."

Half an hour later the men were on board the New York express. If they had not been in such a hurry to get away, and if they had watched the river for a while, they would have seen Detective Conlin swimming toward the bank.

"I was an idiot to trust that Smithers," Conlin admitted, as he stood up and then made for the road. "When I get hold of him I'll give him something to remember me by. Now I'm going back to that vault."

Conlin found the door of the vault open. He jammed a block under it to keep it open and then, after lighting his dark lantern, which he found lying on the floor of the passage, the detective walked back into the main chamber.

In one corner he found a bundle of letters. He read the superscriptions and uttered an exclamation of gratification.

"So, so!" he exclaimed. "The murderers came here after the robbery. This is an important find. These letters were all written by Miss Dorothy to Hugh Bartlett. The seconded must have lost them out of his pocket."

He chuckled as he shoved the missives into one of the side pockets of his coat, and then went on with the search.

Like a bloodhound on a trail he looked around in every direction, poking into holes and crevices, turning over dust and rubbish. Under a pile of sticks which he had overturned Conlin made a discovery. He drew forth a sack coat, a waistcoat, and a pair of trousers that were rolled up into a bundle. As he unrolled them he saw that they had been worn only a short time.

Spreading them out upon the floor he turned the light full upon them.

"They are spotted with blood—the blood of Dr. Cleverly!" he exclaimed. "The murderer wore this suit and hid it here, congratulating himself that it would never be discovered."

Conlin inspected the garments closely. Inside the hanger strap of the coat a name was written in indelible ink.

"Hugh Bartlett!" the detective said as he read the name. "This evidence will hang you. Miss Dorothy cannot save you now."

On the way to the railroad station he stopped at the Cleverly mansion and inquired for Miss Dorothy. Jagers in-

formed him that his mistress was not at home.

"When did she leave?" Conlin asked.

"I don't know," the butler replied. "Her maid told me that she did not see her go out."

The detective surmised that Dorothy had met Bartlett.

Late that night an important conference took place at Police Headquarters between Conlin and the Chief of the Detective Bureau. The reporters were informed that the police had secured evidence which proved conclusively that Hugh Bartlett was the murderer of Dr. Cleverly.

CHAPTER XIII.

Hot on the Trail.

Danforth's presence in the car made Brockey uneasy. He got up, walked along the aisle and sat down behind Danforth, who was busily engaged in reading a letter.

The conductor came in, as Danforth handed him his ticket to punch Brockey saw that it was for a through trip to Philadelphia.

In the rear car Dorothy and Miss Rossmore were talking in low and earnest tones about the mysterious cryptogram, which they were examining.

"I feel sure I am right," Dorothy said. "The key to the hiding place of the murderers is there, as well as the motive for the crime, the route and final destination, and the place where the will and money are concealed. Let me look at the writing again."

The artist passed the cryptogram to Dorothy, who took a pencil and commenced to mark out certain words and letters. She spent a very long time at it.

"Ah!" Dorothy cried, "now I have it. You notice here the allusion to 'Puzzle of Turks' Well, that led one to think of the famous old 'Puzzle of Turks,' wherein every tenth man is picked out. I commenced to experiment, counting the words from the start. Every tenth word I used at first. The sentence was a mere jumble. Then I set down the ninth, eighth and at last the seventh words—"

"And the use of every seventh word disclosed—"

"This sentence: 'FROM NORTHERN END OF OLD CHURCH IN CENTRE OF LOT SEVEN FEET OVER ONE ACRE.' That is where the hiding place of the robbers is situated. Isn't it clear?"

"It is, indeed. The old church figures in the third proposition also."

"True, that reads: 'From northern end of old church follow centre to centre, going a thousand yards.'"

"And you firmly believe that this old church is in or near Winona?"

"I do."

"What can be meant by 'centre of a lot seven feet over one acre?' asked Elsie Rossmore.

"Ah!" said Dorothy. "That is the point. It probably means the centre of a lot which is seven feet more than one acre in extent. To find the centre you must find the dimensions of the lot. If fractions are to be employed a lot of any shape might be obtained, but if the lot must be a rectangle, whose sides have whole numbers of feet, that's a different problem, and that is what I am going to find out."

"Philadelphia," the conductor called out. Here they had to change to the Pittsburgh and Western section. After they had stepped out on the platform Dorothy looked around. Suddenly she started, and catching hold of Miss Rossmore's arm whispered:

"Look at that man who is standing near the smoking car."

"Do you know him?" the artist asked.

"He is Philip Danforth. Can it be possible that he is following us?"

"Our train leaves in five minutes, we haven't time to watch him."

"They hurried over to the Pittsburgh express and entered the sleeping car next to the smoker. Their discovery had made them both nervous.

They peeped out of the car window and scrutinized every person that passed along the platform.

Brockey walked a short distance behind Danforth, who had not noticed him in the car.

"He's looking for some one," Brockey thought, as Danforth stopped at the gate and scanned the faces of the crowd on the other side. He glanced up at the clock on the wall. The hands pointed to three minutes of the time that the Pittsburgh limited was scheduled to start.

"If they don't come in a minute or so I'll

miss that train," Brockey heard him mutter.

Just then two men pushed through the crowd and came up to Danforth. They were Smithers and Gardner. Brockey recognized them.

"What kept you?" Danforth exclaimed with a fierce oath.

"I'll tell you as soon as we get on board the train," Gardner replied, and they all ran toward the Pittsburgh express, the starting gong having at that moment been struck.

Brockey was close behind them. They climbed onto the platform of the smoker as the train was starting.

Brockey stood out on the platform, undecided how to act. He looked back into the next car and he saw Dorothy standing in the compartment near the door beckoning to him to come in.

She and Miss Rossmore had seen Danforth and his companions enter the smoking car. Ben opened the door and walked into the compartment. Dorothy drew the portiere across the entrance.

Before she could speak to Brockey they heard the door of the car open and a voice, which they recognized as Danforth's, exclaimed:

"I guess we can get a compartment in this car, even if the smoker is filled up."

Dorothy and her companions looked at each other in silence. Within a yard of them Danforth, Gardner and Smithers were standing.

"I think this first compartment will answer our purpose," Danforth continued. The occupants saw the portiere shake as he caught hold of it with the intention of pulling it aside.

(To be concluded next Sunday.)

THE MYSTERIOUS CRYPTOGRAM.

| Pick | Railroad Saturday. | Tonight |
|--------------------|---|------------------------------|
| safe | from a hard trip by cars on | Northern Central; |
| Eight miles | by canal from | end |
| lock | but I can't be certain | of starting |
| for the East on to | Old | Church. Probably we |
| will | have to | follow in on afternoon train |
| and | or walk to | centre |
| | get Doctor on to puzzle of Turks Towns hidden | |
| | very cleverly. The lot of us had | |
| | all assumed | that |
| seven was | "centre," but with the added feet, as read | |
| in going | the rules over, we find | |
| the sum a | "confounded one." | |
| Thousand | acre cemetery of church | |
| yards | | |
| | | HYPOTH. |

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